

Special Thanks To:

Bruce Dickey	Jarald Milanich, Ph.D.
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Listed below are sources and information about some of the artifacts and items that were used for inspiration and reference in this painting. Some of the items depicted were based on old paintings or engravings, and many others came from private collections and are unlisted.

1. *Eupatagus antillarum*. Eocene age, Lafayette County, Florida State Museum collection, Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville.
4. Mastodon tooth. Pleistocene age, courtesy of Bruce Dickey.
6. Atlatls. Reproductions courtesy of Reese Moore.
8. Eagle totem. Fort Center site, Glades County. Ca. A.D. 200-600. Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville.
15. Incised pottery. Desoto County. Safety Harbor, ca. A.D. 1350-1500. Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville.
17. Deer figurehead. Key Marco, Collier County. Date unknown, possibly ca. A.D. 600-800. University Museum, Philadelphia.
18. Artifact with fingernail design. Surface collection, Bell site, Okaloosa County. Thought to be Weeden Island based on associated materials. Temple Mound Museum, Fort Walton Beach.
24. Feline figure. Key Marco site, Collier County. Date unknown, probably Late Prehistoric. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
25. Copper disc. Rainy Slough, Glades County, Tallant Collection. Early Historic, after A.D. 1500. South Florida Museum and Bishop Planetarium, Bradenton.
39. Small seated human figure. Tomoka River, Flagler County. A.D. 1480 ± 60. Tomoka State Park, Ormond Beach.

In Ages Past

A PAINTING BY CHRISTOPHER M. STILL

OIL ON LINEN, 126" BY 48"

The earliest known history of the land that is now called Florida is symbolically represented through fossils and artifacts—beginning with a time over 30 million years ago, when water covered much of its surface. It continues through ages where now-extinct animals such as fierce saber-toothed cats, huge mammoths and herds of bison antiquus roamed the land, and into the time of its earliest human inhabitants. Over thousands of years, Florida’s earliest inhabitants developed complex cultures—they hunted, fished, farmed—and left behind them beautiful, artful objects made from natural materials—fascinating hints of who they were and how they lived.

The scene shows members of a Timucua tribe fishing and gathering food at the mouth of a river. A young woman turns to discover a fish has fallen from her basket, and she sees a crab scrambling to escape. She smiles, admiring its will to survive. Her respect is great because she believes her ancestors live in the smallest of creatures. The woman does not notice the Spanish ship far off on the horizon—a strange new

sight that has alarmed her companions. And she does not realize that this ship brings with it an end to her way of life.

Sitting on the frame of the painting are fossils and artifacts representing several prehistoric Florida cultures. Near the center is a map, originally drawn by the French artist and explorer Jacques le Moyne in 1564, documenting many of the tribes he had seen or heard of in this "new land".

Within 300 years of European contact these native tribes completely disappeared from Florida—mainly victims of diseases, slavery and wars. Traces of their cultures are found in museums throughout the state, but there are many unanswered questions about them, and we continue to search for knowledge and understanding of their lives and times.

Through this painting, the artist hopes to inspire a strong connection to—and a deep respect for—the ancient world of Florida, its beautiful native landscape, and its first inhabitants—who undoubtedly admired the same spectacular sunsets we do today.



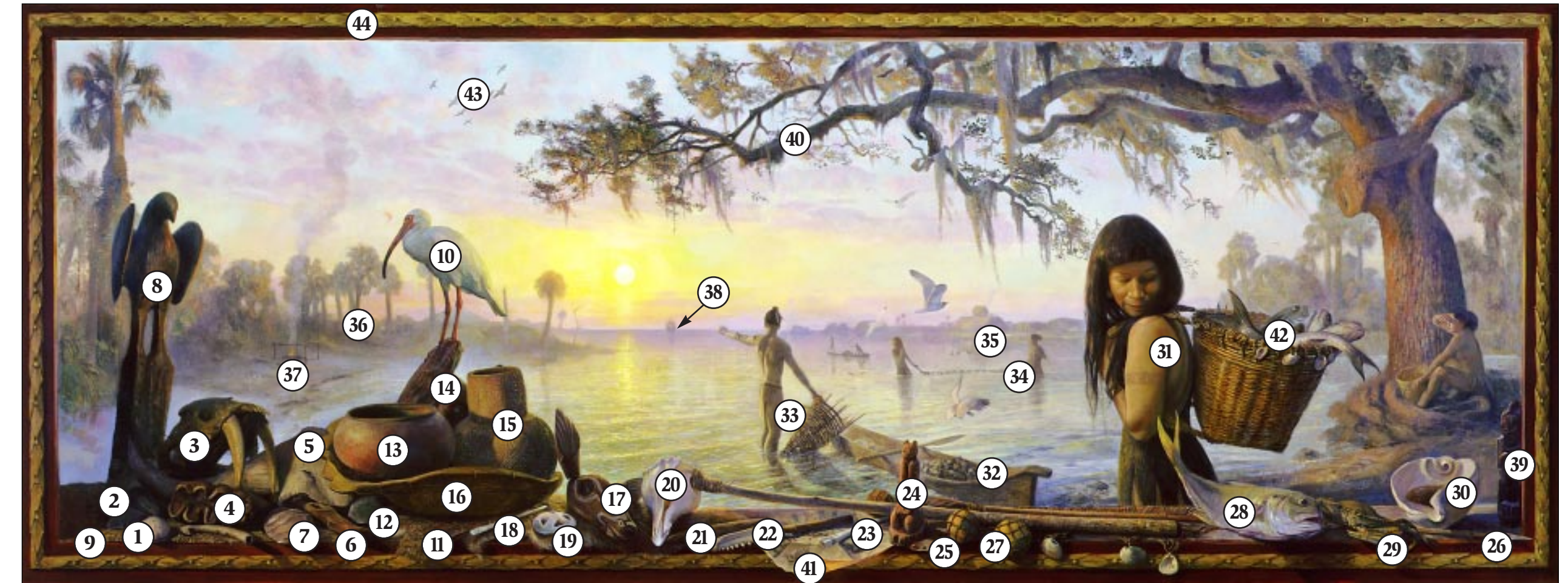
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CHRISTOPHER M. STILL

There is an intentional theme in the painting of eyes that are looking out to watch the viewer in the room. The shape of the opening between the oak tree and artifacts, down to the fish, creates a pattern based on the eye of the Key Marco deer head which helps represent the eye of nature.

Many resources were utilized as references in the creation of this work. Please see the back of this sheet for location details, dates, and collections for some of the fossils and artifacts represented here, as well as a list of special thanks to some of the many people and organizations who helped the artist in various ways during the creation of the painting.

- 1) **Eupatagus Antillarum.** This extinct relative of today's sand dollars and sea urchins represents the Eocene age, some 30 million years ago, when Florida was submerged beneath the sea.
- 2) **Great White Shark's Tooth.** Enormous white sharks, (*carcharodon megalodon*) now extinct, once swam over the land where we now live.
- 3) **Saber-toothed Cat Skull.** This extinct Smilodon, is one of many early Florida mammals that made their homes here 10,000 to 2 million years ago.
- 4) **Mastodon Tooth.** The Mastodon was a prehistoric elephant found in Florida. Its large bones and tusks provide evidence of stone age hunting and butchering.
- 5) **Bison Antiquus Skull.** The skull of this extinct bison has a spear or dart point embedded in it, providing more clues to the hunting methods of Florida's stone age people.
- 6) **Atlatls.** (pronounced *at-ul-lat-uls*) These two types of hand-held slings made from wood or bone were used to propel spears or darts at prey.
- 7) **Early Stone Tool.** This early Paleoindian spear point or knife is approximately 8,000 years old. It is made of chert, a flint-like rock composed of silica-replaced limestone.
- 8) **Eagle Totem.** Originally part of a supporting post for a burial platform, this pine carving was found by a cattleman who saw the eagle's head partially exposed in a muddy area.
- 9) **Mat.** Impressions left on the underside of early pottery lead historians to believe that woven mats were commonly used as early flooring.
- 10) **White Ibis.** Connecting past and present, these wading birds are still common along much of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.



- 11) **Deer Hide.** Deer hide was often used for clothing and sometimes elaborately decorated as described by early explorers.
- 12) **Greenstone Tool.** This tool from around 1100 A.D. is evidence that some tribes traded with others outside the area. The workable greenstone, not native to Florida, was possibly traded for shells, pearls, or shark's teeth.
- 13) **Pottery of Weeden Island Culture.** Ceramic vessels made for burials have often been found upside down on skeletons with a hole broken through their bottoms. It is believed that this would allow the spirit to escape.
- 14) **Key Marco Mask.** The mask is based on one discovered by Frank Cushing in 1896. Clues to the colors painted on these ancient Calusa masks came from watercolors painted by Wells Sawyer. Soon after the masks were exhumed from the mud, their colors swiftly faded.
- 15) **Safety Harbor Incised Pottery.** This ceramic pot found in Desoto County has a beautiful, complex design.
- 16) **Turtle Shell.** The shell of a large snapping turtle makes a fine bowl.
- 17) **Key Marco Deer.** This Calusa artifact from the famous Key Marco site has become one of the icons of Florida's

ancient culture. It was carved from wood and painted. The shape of its large eye was used as a subtle design in the center of the painting.

- 18) **Bone Artifact with Fingernail Design.** Hairpins, needles, and other tools were made from antler and bone. This piece points out of the painting.
- 19) **Shell Gorget.** Carved from marine shell, this item is thought to have been used for personal decoration.
- 20) **Whelk Digging Tool.** The whelk was not only an important food source, but also used for tools. In this painting it represents an evolution into farming.
- 21) **Shark's Tooth Tool.** A good, sharp tool used for carving.
- 22) **Barracuda Jaw Saw.** Many parts of animals and fish were used as tools or decoration.
- 23) **Egret Bone.** The hollow bones of birds were used to control burning in the carving process by blowing air through them.
- 24) **Kneeling Feline Figure.** This well known figure from the Key Marco site is shown in the painting as it might have looked as it was being carved—possibly using tools from the three previous descriptions.
- 25) **Copper Disc.** Some early ornaments or pieces of jewelry were made from

copper brought into Florida through exchanges with other cultures. Gold and silver were sometimes retrieved from shipwrecks, and might also be pounded or filed into pieces of native design.

- 26) **Arrow.** Hand-propelled spears gave way to long bows which were used for hunting and in warfare.
- 27) **Fish Net.** Natural fibers were woven into nets. Shells were used as weights and gourds or wooden pegs served as floats.
- 28) **Jack Cravalle.** These fish were found abundantly in rivers leading into the gulf—productive places to net and trap fish.
- 29) **Blue Crab.** Blue crab is still a popular Florida delicacy. This crab, in a defensive position, shows a strong fighting spirit admired by the native woman.
- 30) **Whelk Cup.** A drinking vessel often used to drink a tea made from holly berries (*Black Tea*) in a native ritual. This ceremony may have been conducted before battle.
- 31) **Timucua Woman with Fish Basket.** The woman's dress and tattoo were based on an early watercolor by John White. This artist painted many pictures of Native Americans, believed to be based on the works of Jacques le Moyne, the French artist/explorer.

Suzie Henry, a Seminole Indian currently living in Tampa on a small reservation called Bobby Henry's Seminole Village, served as the model for this woman.

- 32) **Dugout Canoe.** Large logs were burned and carved to create these long boats.
- 33) **Man with Fish Trap.** A man points to a ship on the horizon. He holds a fish trap made from reed and vines. This trap was staked in place and baited to attract fish, crabs, eels, and snails. The basket was then lifted up to trap the creatures inside. These traps could be up to ten feet in length.
- 34) **Men Fishing with Nets.**
- 35) **Village.** Daily refuse and the remains of shellfish were dumped into piles called middens. This midden material was sometimes used to elevate areas in a village for such things as the home of a chief, a temple, or great hall. Some villages were circled with tall poles. Others were merely groups of thatched huts.
- 36) **Burial Mound.** A raised area might indicate a burial site. They were generally made of sand and sometimes placed in the center of a midden.
- 37) **Fish Grill.** The smoking of fish by Timucua Indians was depicted in this way in an engraving by Jacques le Moyne.

38) **Spanish Ship.** The Nina (of Christopher Columbus fame) was used as a reference for this ship—typical of Spanish ships of the 1500s.

39) **Small Seated Human Figure.** This interesting figure carved of Brazilwood was recovered from Early Historic period contexts.

40) **Live Oak with Resurrection Ferns, Orchids, and Bromeliads.**

41) **Map.** Jacques le Moyne, the French artist and explorer who helped found the short-lived colony at Fort Caroline, created this map in 1564 showing the locations of tribes discovered in Florida. Many place names were based on hearsay, so the map offers a schematic representation rather than a geographically correct one.

42) **Mullet, Puffer Fish, and Jack Cravalle.**

43) **Wood Storks in Flight.** These large wading birds used to nest in huge colonies of up to 10,000 pairs, but have had endangered species status since 1984 due to habitat destruction.

44) **Frame Molding.** The molding is from the John and Mable Ringling Museum, and appears on all of the murals. The Ringling Museum is the official State Art Museum of Florida.

About the Mural

The first in a series of eight murals depicting the history of Florida, commissioned by the Florida House of Representatives for the House Chamber, *In Ages Past* is a traditional oil painting on linen canvas, stretched over a large frame.

About the Artist

Christopher M. Still (1961-) is a native Floridian who received a full scholarship through a national competition to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He continued his studies with courses in Human Anatomy at Jefferson Medical School and an apprenticeship in traditional techniques in Florence, Italy.

While at the Pennsylvania Academy, the artist earned awards for outstanding accomplishment in painting, a European Travel Fellowship, and the Pennsylvania Governor's Award for Outstanding Accomplishment in Fine Art.

In 1986 he returned to the Tampa Bay area to explore his home state through his art with "the new eyes he had received through education".

Christopher Still's paintings can be found in museums and many private collections, including the Governor's Mansion of Florida and the Smithsonian Institution.

He painted the official state portrait of the late Governor Lawton Chiles in 1998.

Christopher Still currently lives in Tarpon Springs, Florida with his wife and two daughters.

For more information, please visit
www.christopherstill.com